

From: Dan Dickerman
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 12/8/01 4:09pm
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I am writing in response to the request for public comment on the recent Microsoft anti-trust settlement, to express my disapproval of one of the aspects of the proposed settlement. Though this issue has been raised by other groups before, I am also proposing a possible compromise of this settlement which would be more generally acceptable.

Specifically, the portion of the settlement by which Microsoft will donate computers and software to educational institutions is a minor cost to MS, while allowing them to essentially advertise their own products to thousands of schoolkids and educators. This allows them advertising space, and gets their foot-in-the-door of the education market, a longstanding stronghold of their OS competitor Apple Computer, and a growing stronghold with Linux, under the guise of actually penalising Microsoft in some way.

I would suggest that if Microsoft were sincere in their will to better the educational system through computer hardware and software donations, they should not be allowed to present their own products as a way to fulfill that donation. Such a donation could only be considered a sincere and worthy part of a settlement if Microsoft were to pay the costs of donating strictly non-Microsoft products, such as those which run Linux and MacOS, and with a prohibition that these computers not be allowed to run MS software or for the Microsoft name or logo to appear anywhere on these products. Further, for any such donation to be of true use to a school, there will be a need for ongoing computer support, configuration and training. Again, such services should be paid for by Microsoft, but should be provided by non-MS service companies which are known for their strengths in promoting and servicing these non-Microsoft products, so as to prevent MS from evangelizing its own products in this environment.

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Dan Dickerman
Mountain View, CA